THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) to (c) According to the news-item that appeared in the Press, a survey conducted by Indian Institute of Public Opinion concluded that majority of the commuters were not satisfied with some aspects of the operations of DTC. Important aspects emphasised for improvements were in respect of avoidance of missing trips, skipping of bus stops, maintenance of buses and the attitude of the crew of the private buses towards commuters.

(d) and (e) DTC, as a continuing measure, has instituted a system of regular checks to regulate speed, punctuality and halting of buses at stops. By strict watch on maintenance of buses, the fleet utilisation of DTC per day now is 92 per cent on all working days. There is constant effort to reduce rate of break-down and missing of trips. In addition, refresher courses for drivers and conductors of DTC on behavioural aspects are organised.

In order to achieve progressive improvement, DTC has also taken measures of decentralisation of administrative, financial and operational powers, to the regional heads.

Issuing six passports to Rajinder Singh 'king of Amritsar

1747. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a person named Rajinder Singh 'King' from Amritsar has been issued six passports by Government;

(b) if so, how Government have issued six passports to him against the provisions of the Indian Passports Act according to which only one passport is to be issued to an individual; and

(c) what action has been taken by Government against the said Rajinder Singh 'King' and why the illegal passports issued to him have not been impounded?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) Shri Rajinder Singh was issued a passport on 12th July, 1982. Thereafter, reporting damage and depositing this passport with the Passport Officer, he was given a replacement. This occured twice again. Currently he does not hold any valid Indian passport.

(b) No violation of the Passports Act was involved.

(c) Does not arise

Attachment of Mukhed-Manmad and Kolhapur Pune sections to Central Railway

1748. DR. BAPU KALDATE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether several Members of Parliament have made a request to the Government recently to attach MUKHED-MANMAD and KOLHAPUR-PUNE sections of South Central Railway to the Central Railway;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any decision in this regard; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The jurisdiction of a Railway Division/Zone is decided with reference to administrative and operational requirements consistent with the needs of efficiency. It has not been considered desirable to disturb the existing arrangement so far.

Assistance for 'Buddha Poornima Project' at Hyderabad

1749. SHRI PRABHAKAR RAO KALVALA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to give financial assistance to the Government of Andhra Pradesh for the "Budha Poornima Project" at Hyderabad; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Extension of railway upto Agartala

1750. SHRI NARAYAN KAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any provision has been made in the Eighth Five Year Plan for extension of railway upto Agartala;

(b) whether the necessary survey works for this extension have been completed; and

(c) if so, by when railway extension upto Agartala is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) to (c) No new railway line project to be taken up in the VIII Plan has been identified. Final Location Survey for extension on the railway line to Agartala has been take up. It cannot, therefore, be stated, at this stage, as to when the project would be completed.

Air India proposal to purchase airbus 340 aircraft

1751. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news item which appeared in "The Times of India" on the 10th July, 1989, to the effect that Air India is negotiating for the purchase of the futuristic, wide-bodied jetliner Airbus 340;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what amount of funds has been allocated for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) and (b) The integrated fleet plan is under consideration of the Air India Board which has appointed a Committee to evaluate different aircraft types and submit recommendations to the Board. The Board Committee has held negotiations with aircraft manufacturers including M/s. Airbus Industries; and

(c) The estimated cost of Rs. 1800 crores for acquiring 12 aircraft is proposed to be met out of commercial borrowings from Internatsonal Finance Market.

Decline in the Shipping Tonnage

1752. SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the country's shipping tonnage, at the end of the Sixth Five Year Plan, expected to be at the end of Seventh Five Year Plan and as on the 30th June, 1989;

(b) what are the reasons for decline in the tonnage, if any; and

(c) what remedial steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) Tonnage at the end of the Sixth Five Year Plan: 6.3 MGRT.

Expected tonnage at the end of Seventh Five Year Plan: 6.00 MGRT and tonnage as on 30th June, 1989 : 35.74 MGRT.

(b) The reasons for the slight decline in tonnage are, among others, the recessionary conditions prevailing in the shipping industry up to the year 1987 and the scrapping of a large number of old vessels in the Indian fleet.

(c) Steps taken by the Government to increase the tonnage are:—

(i) Speeding up the Acquisition procedures;